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First record of Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* for The Gambia

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Première mention du Pouillot à grands sourcils *Phylloscopus inornatus* pour la Gambie. Un Pouillot à grands sourcils *P. inornatus* a été observé et photographié à Kotu (13°28'N 16°43'W) en Gambie, le 3 décembre 2005. Ceci constitue la première mention documentée pour le pays et la deuxième pour l'Afrique sub-Saharienne, la première étant celle d'un individu au nord du Sénégal, le 6 décembre 2003.

On 3 December 2005, between 09.00 and 09.30 hrs, T. Armstrong, N. Marshall, J. Rayner, D. Smith and F. Wake watched a small, boldly marked *Phylloscopus* with two gleaming wingbars busily foraging in a partially leafed and flowering Winter-thorn *Acacia albida* along the Kotu Cycle Track, Kombo St Mary Division, in coastal Gambia (13°28'N 16°43'W). The bird appeared to be picking insects from the blossoms. The only other species present for the duration of the observation was a single Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*. The two birds were watched with high-quality optics from a distance of c.6 m and the *Phylloscopus* was recorded on video. The habitat consists of heavily degraded coastal scrub with scattered deciduous trees and Oil-palms *Elaeis guiniensis* next to an *Avicennia* mangrove-fringed coastal creek. In November–April, birding visitors based at nearby hotels constantly watch the site.

Description

Head dominated by long, bright, creamy-white supercilium, which extended well beyond ear-coverts, kinked as it tapered slightly onto nape, and bordered below by narrow dark eyestripe. Ear-

coverts olivaceous with some indistinct flecking. Crown olive-green without central stripe. Nape and mantle plain olive-green. In the bright light conditions, rear views revealed a warm green cast to mantle and body. Wings darker overall, with two very strong, broad, creamy-white bars on greater and median coverts, tapering slightly towards leading edge of wing. Both wingbars appeared much stronger than normally seen on autumn individuals of Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus* in the UK; this may have been due to the brighter light conditions in The Gambia (T. Armstrong pers. comm.). Flight-feathers dark olive; primaries and secondaries with very narrow pale fringes, tertials with broad pale fringes, though not as bold as on coverts. Underparts dull whitish. Legs and feet orange-brown. Bill dark with a hint of a pale base to lower mandible. Call heard twice, a loud, sharp *tweep* or *tweest* without inflection.

Discussion

Based on the above-mentioned features, the bird was identified as a Yellow-browed Warbler. The generally brighter plumage, leg colour and call eliminated the nearest possible confusion species,

Hume's Leaf Warbler *P. humei*, which has never been recorded in Africa (Urban *et al.* 1997, Snow & Perrins 1998). The observers are also familiar with Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides*, Arctic Warbler *P. borealis* and Pallas's Warbler *P. proregulus*. This observation, with photographic substantiation (the videograbs permit positive identification but are of insufficient quality to reproduce here), constitutes the first record of Yellow-browed Warbler in The Gambia.

Yellow-browed Warbler breeds at high and middle latitudes of the Palearctic in Siberia, with the main wintering grounds in south-east Asia (Cramp 1992). In recent decades it has occurred increasingly in Europe, with exceptional numbers in autumn 2003 (van den Berg 2003, 2004). In October 2005, 1,250 were recorded in Britain (Golley 2005). It is a rare vagrant to North Africa and the first documented observation in sub-Saharan Africa was made on 6 December 2003 in northern Senegal (Cruse 2004).

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Tony Armstrong, Neil Marshall, John Rayner, Doug Smith and Fred Wake observed the bird and submitted a full description. I thank them for the courtesy of this and for responding to further queries. Modou

Colley accompanied the group. Tony & Carol Spencer kindly supplied video footage.

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First record of Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* for Ghana

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Première mention du Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* pour le Ghana. Un mâle adulte du Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* a été observé et enregistré sur magnétoscope au Parc National de Mole, Ghana, le 23 mars 2006. Ceci constitue la première donnée documentée pour le pays.

On 23 March 2006, an adult male Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* was observed in Mole National Park, Ghana, by seven members of a Rockjumper Birding Tours group. The bird was perched atop a small thorn tree below the small escarpment immediately in front of the lodge, at c.80–90 m from the observers, permitting excellent unobstructed views through telescopes. It remained there for c.5 minutes, from 17.05 to 17.10 hrs, and was video-taped. It was not seen again during our two-day stay at Mole.

Description

Typical bunting shape, similar in size to a Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting *E. tahapisi* seen a few minutes earlier and clearly larger than Pin-tailed Whydahs *Vidua macroura* perched nearby. The head was grey with a slight blue tone, except for a pale yellow moustachial stripe and throat. The bill was pale pink and there was an obvious pale yellow eye-ring. The blue-grey colour of the head extended to the breast as a broad curving band, clearly demarcated from the dull chestnut-orange of the rest of the underparts. The chestnut